

HARLEM FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS

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Social Justice Will Fail

New York, N. Y., 5 Cents

THE MEANING OF FRIENDSHIP

by Austin Briggs-Hall

*Once to every Man and Nation Comes
The Moment to Decide*

*In the strife of Truth with Falsehood,
For the Good or Evil Side.*

I KNOW of nothing more important or necessary than drawing close to the abundance and shelter of friendship today. As you live together relatives, neighbors — all, under the warmth of human understanding, and the comfort of your rich relationships it is perhaps not easy to fully acknowledge that over vast territories of space — covering the four corners of the earth—there are men in boats, in tanks and in planes—on the desert sands—the snowed terrain—the briny vastness and the open plain—facing each other with gruesome implements and weapons determined to wield upon each other the silence, the quietude, the stillness of death. All of us are related, in some way, to this true and horrible reality either by the giving of a near and loved one in sacrifice and patriotism or by daily participation in the many toils and duties which are necessary parts of this symphony of human tragedy. If we could sit—as it were—at the side of the road and just look upon this sorry spectacle we would not be misunderstood, perhaps, if we wondered, just what has become of the soul of man to whom life was so lovingly given? What we sometimes gallantly and reverently call History gives us the picture of man everlastingly trying to conquer and capture the mystery of himself—his existence. As time passes on and knowledge becomes within the reach of more and more people, theories are painstakingly developed and sincerely given to people as the way or the step that would bring them clear and closer to the life of peace, love and plenty it has become natural for most all humans to seek. The philosopher says—this or that ideology will give it; the ethnologists say, this or that race endowed it; the nutritionist adds: vitamins; the social worker says better housing and more

playgrounds; the government says—a higher standard of living; the economist says—higher or lower wages, depending upon his attachment to the flow of profits; the scientist offers his inventions and formulas; the educator says education and gives letters; the student either shouts Utopia or speculates on capitalism or socialism or some other variety of "ism" compatible with his personal ambitions or his vanities—or, his selfishness—

or whatever he believes expresses human nature.

Today—due to the war boom—when the average family, in many districts, is making more than at any time in the history of America; when a greater number of people—particularly in this city—are living in more suitable houses; when science gives to us instruments that do everything but create man; when Ph.D.'s, LL.D.'s and professors of this or that subject wash dishes in restaurants or run elevators in public buildings; when on practically any corner you can hear from the mouths of average men the "ifs" and "buts" of government politics, economics and life; when out of the mouths of babes practically on any side street in our districts, you can learn more of vitamins than our grandparents ever dreamed about—man is still facing man across the barricades of civilization the world over, with nothing but hate between them. But, you—just a few of the many millions—have found a divine quality—Friendship—which, when embraced in its fullness; which, when shared in every day living with the next person, and the next and the next — without end — constitutes a bulwark of human fellowship, a tower of human understanding, that cannot be moved by the intermittent breezes of differences, exploitation, discrimination or hate which—from time immemorial—have been cutting down great numbers of the world population.

Today, in cities and countries the world over—magic words, such as freedom, liberty and living space can impress millions of people over night to hate each other—to hate whom they have never seen—to hate—when they have never come into contact with each other. But, this will all end one day and man, village and nation will again have to step, over night, into the plane of every man and country living with a neighbor. I think of this often . . . this rapid and complete change that millions of people make

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Hymn for Paschaltide

*The dawn was purpling o'er the sky;
With alleluias rang the air;
Earth held a glorious jubilee;
Hell gnash'd its teeth in fierce
despair:*

*When our most valiant, mighty
King*

*From death's abyss, in dread array,
Led the long-prison'd Fathers forth,
Into the beam of life and day.*

*When he, whom stone and seal
and guard*

*Had safely to the tomb consign'd,
Triumphant rose and buried death
Deep in the grave he left behind.*

*"Calm all your grief, and still
your tears,"*

*Hark! the descending Angel cries,
"For Christ is risen from the dead.
And death is slain, no more to rise."*

O Jesus! from the death of sin

*Keep us, we pray; so shalt thou be
The everlasting Paschal joy*

Of all the souls new-born in thee.

*To God the Father, with the
Son*

*Who from the grave immortal rose,
And thee, O Paraclete, be praise,
While age on endless ages flows.*

Amen.

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HARLEM FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS

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QUO VADIS?

WHERE are we going? What of tomorrow? Like a gentle breeze the murmur of this question began way back around December Seventh, 1941 . . . since then it has swelled into a wind of mighty velocity. If it remains unanswered, if the fears and hunger of men for Truth are not stilled, and filled . . . then it will become a tornado which will leave nothing but ruins behind it . . . IT MUST BE ANSWERED AND IT MUST BE ANSWERED NOW—TODAY . . . TOMORROW WILL BE TOO LATE.

Straws in the wind are abundant. Directions are clear. The crossroad at which humanity stands sharply defined. Why then do we hesitate? For hesitate we do. We who have the fullness of ALL TRUTH, for we have God, and His Spouse, the Church Eternal and Infallible . . . why is it that OUR voice is the softest in these days of din and noise from all quarters? Why don't we invest in loud speakers, we who have Faith, Hope and Charity to give?

There is so little time. So much to do. Beneath the dangerous, elusive calm of human sea in America, deep raging currents gather; currents that, if left uncontrolled, will rise to the surface, and in a mighty flood rush and destroy so much of what we hold dearer than life. Let us now prepare and show the Way that will turn the raging torrents in human souls to fertilizing flows that will make our valleys green . . . Oh, let us hurry . . . this is the acceptable time . . . tomorrow will be too late . . . for anything except martyrdom.

Humanity is fighting, dying . . . grimly they work long hours, bear silently restrictions and rationings unheard of yesterday . . . for what? For a better tomorrow . . . for the four freedoms . . . And yet, really for only one . . . THE FREEDOM FROM WANT . . . WHICH IS STILL WITH US . . . hidden deeply below the surface of visible things . . . it is there in many shapes and forms.

The slums, dark and dank in our cities, are still with us. The Negro is still a pariah. Poverty still stalks the land, preventable diseases still take their unnecessary toll . . . Men murmur under their breath, and their murmur swells into a thunder . . . soon it might break into a storm . . . because men asked for bread and are still being given stones.

This war is about the dignity of man. And man knows it. Either we recognize it willingly, or we shall pay with our lives for not having done so in time. This is the century of Justice. Social. Interracial. Personal Justice. God's Justice. The Beatitudes are in flower. They are coming into their own. Above all—hunger for Justice, which God said must . . . will be filled. Let us fill it

now. We have all the answers. We Catholics always had. Let us disregard old patterns of thinking and doing and embrace, ahead of others, new patterns . . . for it really does not matter how we preach the Truth . . . in stately old language or in the new slangs . . . ALL THAT MATTERS IS THAT WE DO. In the market places and the street. As Christ and the Apostles did. Let us start now, let us hurry—there is so much to do.

FOR the "Masses" are forgetting us. We are losing them through absenteeism. We are not where they are. We speak loudest where they cannot hear us at all. In fashionable hotels, where they would not be admitted except as waiters and waitresses. In basements of Churches, which they have ceased to attend. We must not expect them to come to us. WE MUST GO AFTER THEM . . . FOR TODAY . . . NINETY-NINE SHEEP ARE BEING LOST . . . SO LET US LEAVE THE ONE THAT IS SAFE IN THE ENCLOSURE AND BEGIN THE ROUNDING UP OF THE OTHERS . . .

It is not hard . . . For men are themselves seeking us . . . yet not knowing that they do. They will listen to the tidings of great joy as the multitudes listened to the Apostles after Pentecost . . . if only we speak where they can hear . . . Let us forget old patterns, even of Catholic Action, and adopt the new techniques of today. Let us all become Commandos of God, and go into holy forays after souls of men.

THE weapons are so simple. Networks of Libraries, little, humble and small where the masses live. Right next door to factories, in dingy slums, let us bring them the light of God's truth. Let every Library be a Catholic School. Filled with strong meat. And let us not be afraid to label our spiritual food well. Theology, Apologetics, God, Man, Soul . . . Let us use simple language of the Gospel, and men will listen. Bishop Sheil did that in Chicago and over 700 people registered in his free school . . . A network of these will do the job to be done. Discussion groups, Open Forums, Catholic Books . . . Priests everywhere and instructed laity on duty almost twenty-four hours . . . humble places tucked away in the poorest parts of our towns . . . and the raging torrents of the human seas will be controlled and turned to grace and joy . . .

Let us do it now . . . the need is so great . . . Let us give the answers the world is clamoring for . . . where it can hear them best . . . LET US DO IT NOW BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE . . . WE HAVE ALONE THE TRUE JUSTICE OF GOD . . . WE CAN GIVE MAN SUPERNATURAL DIGNITY . . . LET US TELL HIM SO . . . NOW.

STATEMENT BY A NEGRO

If you discriminate against me because I am uncouth, I can become mannerly. If you ostracize me because I am unclean, I can cleanse myself. If you segregate me because I lack knowledge, I can become educated. But if you discriminate against me because of my color, I can do nothing. God gave me that. I have no protection against race prejudice but I take refuge in cynicism, bitterness and hatred.

Andrew Hatcher to the Students of Princeton in the Daily Princetonian

STAFF REPORTER

by N. J. G.

THIS has been a month of saying "hello" and "goodby" . . . visitors have streamed into our little library . . . some new friends . . . and some well loved old-timers. Herb McKnight, now studying medicine at Howard in Washington, D. C., was up for a few days after midterm exams. His class will finish in 2 years, 9 months, instead of four years . . . "but we aren't missing a thing the other boys had" says Herb . . . everything is just intensified and hurried, due to the war.

Private Allan Archibald manages to get over from an Army camp in New Jersey every two or three weeks. "Ace" graduated with Herb last year from St. John's in Minnesota. When the war is over, he is going to study to be a lawyer; in the meantime he is getting everything out of Army life he can . . . doesn't know yet whether he will be shipped across or not.

Al Patterson, who wrote so entertainingly in the last issue, detoured from Virginia to Mississippi to stop in at Friendship House. Al likes the Navy, says the White officers are fine and would die for the men. The difficulty is only with the White Southern officers, who call the colored sailors under them, "nigger" or "boy" . . . naturally the Northern Negroes resent it and show their resentment. In the recreation room one night a white sailor asked Al to play ping pong with him. Soon there were several black-white couples teamed up . . . Interracialism making headway. "Friendship House," said Al, "is what we're fighting for. Keep it up and don't let anything stop you. We need you." When Al first walked in the other day, he took one look at the library windows, muttered "that Walter!" (Walter is official window washer since he left) and then went to work . . . happy to be back . . . happy to be doing something for Friendship House again.

OTHER visitors included Joan Overboss and Janet Kelvin from the Ladies of the Grail, who are making a lecture tour through the East. It was their first visit to Harlem and they were entranced with our "littlest" ones, while deplored the poverty of our over-crowded street. We hope to return their visit in the summer and see their beautiful Doddridge Farm near Chicago, where Catholic Action is flowering among green fields, silver streams and wooded hills.

And there are always Priests, Brothers, Seminarians, Sisters and last

CHICAGO HOUSE

by Ann Harrigan

"SO, DAVE," said John Yancey putting a fatherly hand on his shoulder, "when you get to Biloxi, try not to stop over. Go right on to Tuskegee. But if you have to, mind your p's and q's . . . you'll be south then, you know, so, though there's nothing to be much afraid of, just keep to yourselves, and you will avoid trouble." With tears in her eyes, Marge told me this little sidelight about the departure of David James for the United States Air Corps, adding, "Gosh, it's much worse when you really *know* a colored person . . . I thought I realized what Jim Crow is for them to put up with . . . but this brings it home much more. Why, he couldn't even get sleeping accommodations, and'll have to sit up for a day and a half!"

I thought of a lad with a shock of silky black hair who ambled into Friendship House last fall soon after we opened. He had a slightly superior smile, and a "show me" expression. He glanced at his watch as if to imply it was a short visit . . . Yet, late last night, the staff and volunteers were still trying to say farewell to this same lad because . . . Well, why? Was it that large, supple, gesticulating frame that doubled him (and us) up in laughter? Or, was it watching him wax serious and eloquent in propounding solutions for the reconstruction of the social order?

Yes, Dave, loyal, faithful, hardly missing a day, who of us will not be a better person for having known you, a better volunteer for having seen you in season and out of season doing your stuff?

So, we want to dedicate this column to you, Dave . . . and to you, Bernard, our first gift to Uncle Sam . . . and to all those thousands of gay, generous, intelligent colored men who are pouring to the armed forces. So we gave you a party. Bill Temple brought his guitar . . . we played kid games in the

but far from least, friendly lay people who want to see Friendship House "with their own eyes." They all pay us a great compliment by coming . . . we love to have visitors.

Maurice Mahon and Vivian Francis were married just before Lent. Both former CYO members and outstanding for their loyalty and cooperation, we wish them everything good in their

Casita . . . drew crazy pictures . . . danced reels, the Lindy . . . and the hep cats had their day. We even had cider (by special arrangement with Blessed Martin) . . . and we sat around afterwards and sang all the old songs. We bought you a sewing kit . . . and you said, "Oh, there'll surely be some little gal down'n Tuskegee to do that sort of thing!" The silver crucifix we gave you breathed our prayer: "God bless you, keep you safe, and bring you back to us, as keenly aware of all the big things happening around us then, as you are now."

BERNARD, our other volunteer who is now one of Uncle Sam's nephews is at Camp Gruber, Officers' training. He writes, "Arose this a.m. at 4:30, ate a barbican breakfast and returned to exercise (temp. 0° F). Reveille blew at 6, but it seemed high noon, because I had completed half a day's labors already. Carried our bags (80 lbs.) a few miles, boarded a train, etc." And so it goes. At Friendship House, Father Cantwell did a superb job editing "Forty Years After," Pope Pius' Letter to the world about rebuilding a social order. On two successive Monday nights we had a Round Table with him, Ed Marciniak, Dave and I, batting out such questions as unions, a functional society, the bourgeois mind in both capitalists and communists (for further information, see Berdyaev's "The Bourgeois Mind"). The hecklers continue, as they always do, but our friends come too . . . Bishop Gilmore of Helena dropped in one Monday night for a short visit, and then didn't want to leave! "Doc" and Lorina Edwards are the ideal couple—in the opinion of everybody in FH, and we certainly love to see them come in. Doc's knowledge of airplanes will not go to waste around here! George Starnes is another of Mrs. Wiley's invaluable assistants, now that we are making a beginning with the High School Group. Best of all, we are planning our first day of recollection to be given by Monsignor Hillenbrand of Mundelein Seminary. There will be about 30 of us, men and women, colored and white, so pray very hard that we really do some spiritual bookkeeping and get to know what we and the work of FH need most. May this auspicious start for Lent pave the way for real prayer and mortifications for the conversion of ourselves, those about us, and the whole world to Christ.

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THE BARONESS JOTS IT DOWN

MARCH is not over yet . . . but perhaps Walter and Flewy were right after all. I should not have asked for anything in March. Least of all money to fit out the kindergarten for our little tots. Logically speaking, it was a foolish thing to do. But I can never be logical before human needs . . . Somehow or other Lady Logic looks utterly out of place when kids are running loose; when juvenile delinquency mounts by leaps and bounds; when seven and eight-year-olds are entrusted with the care of their baby brothers and sisters . . .

Yes, March is not yet over as I write this, and April is just around the corner and we still need the furnishings for the place . . . Taxes or no taxes, Department Stores have never been busier . . . so I won't let Lady Logic in; instead I shall open the door of Friendship House and my heart wide to Brother Hope . . . don't you agree with me, readers and friends . . . that it is the thing to do . . . Now?

Muriel, our lovely, gentle Volunteer of many years, has left us for War work. It is with a heavy heart that we saw her go. We all loved her much. The kids did too—she worked with the Cubs. And now we have reached the state of emergency; in fact of super-emergency. We need Volunteers to give us at least two or three evenings a week . . . There is so much to do on this strange Front of ours. Surely, in New York City and Brooklyn, from amongst one million or more Catholics, there are some young women who see the Face of Christ in the Negro and want to help His desolation . . . Please pray over it, think it over too, and call AUdubon 3-4892. We need you so . . .

Dear and most Reverend Fathers, if you are interested in teaching to eager people, our friends the communists label "the masses," the true answer to their economic problems, and give them the signposts of the Papal Labour Encyclicals to guide them today and inspire them for the tomorrow that looks so bleak . . . please give us an hour a week for our Labour School. It is so vitally important to clarify minds and principles, now, before it is too late.

I AM still travelling. Studying the depths of modern conditions everywhere. Soon I will come back, and share with you the results. Just now I feel as if I have been given "an as-

signment to hell," for wherever I go, I find people confused, bewildered and hungry for Truth. Oh, I speak not of politics, nor even the War; that is only the background of the whole. No, I speak of human souls, the ones God died for. And out of the chaos of my finding, one thing stands out clearly — NEVER HAD THE CHURCH SUCH A GLORIOUS OPPORTUNITY TO REAP A HARVEST OF SOULS . . . for there it stands . . . a field ready for the harvesters . . . yet to cut the wheat, the harvesters must have sharp, clean tools; must be able to answer . . . what men ask of them . . .

Unconsciously, the world has turned to St. Thomas—his trinity in man . . . Body, Mind, Soul . . . three in one—indivisible. Man asks questions today—first, about the body (economics), then about the mind; both, in order to find port for his soul that cries out in unutterable hunger for TRUTH . . . THE FULLNESS THEREOF. But he will not accept it partially today—he wants it complete . . . in St. Thomas' human trinity. THIS IS THE ACCEPTABLE TIME . . . LET US GIVE THEM THE ANSWER . . . FOR WE HAVE IT ALL . . .

STAFF REPORTER

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marriage. Married in our parish Church, St. Mark's, the Staff was able to attend. It was a lovely, lovely wedding.

In the Generals' Clubroom large front window, a beautiful Honor Roll bears witness that twenty-nine former CYO boys are now in the armed forces. From almost every boy on that list we have received letters—most of them many, many times have written . . . and they all echo Al's cry "We need Friendship House." Negroes seem to have a worse time in Texas than anywhere else . . . in both the Army and Navy. One boy wrote "Texas is big in name only." Join us in praying for them, will you?

This is the last issue of volume two . . . yep, we're really getting old!

Happy, happy Easter to you all.

MEANING OF FRIENDSHIP

(Continued from Page 1)

over night from studied indifference to patriotic hatred, from weary hatred back to community and neighborly living. I think of this particularly when would-be wise men generalize with an air of profundity as to how many generations and decades must pass before a people or a nation may take one solitary and simple step towards social justice and humane existence. But, to go back, it is that day of armistice—or, peace, if you insist—that the importance of what you are being taught, what you are doing and what you are living can have great significance to everyone. It is then each of you who live the fullness, the completeness, the uncompromising reality of friendship will face your greatest test; it is then that your will and belief will drive you to communities, districts and municipalities seeking a better and more just way of life for the very least of human beings; it is then, when cowards, opportunists, theoretical and speculators and bigots stand aside and plead 'other duties' that friendship will and must go to the side, the aid, the rescue and the defense of oppressed people all over the world. It is then you can bring home to men's minds there is no stronger weapon than truth, no greater victory than the faith of right over the vicissitudes and weaknesses of human endeavors and no greater strength than friendship—which is indeed the love, the truth and the way of good living.

A poet once dreamed of sitting in a house by the side of the road and being a friend to man—a friend to man? How? To flatter him, maybe? To pity him as some think? Or, could it be as I am wont to feel, to help him—help him with the truth—at all times, feeling and believing that to side with truth is noble though the causes of evil prosper; for though truth's portion be the scaffold—yet, that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown—standeth God, within the shadow, keeping watch—keeping reckoning watch—above His own.

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